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ABSTRACT

Linking Institutional Networks to Community and Kinship Systems (LINCKS) is a three year research and demonstration project undertaken by the Washington, D.C. Parent Child Center, Cardozo High School, and the American Institutes for Research to show how communities can work together to better develop their young parent families. The project's major objective is to demonstrate that support provided to a school age parent and his/her child can be increased by maximizing the use of formal and informal structures in urban neighborhoods. The target population consists primarily of black high school mothers, most of whom are from low income families. An evaluation of the project's first year is presented in this paper. Staffing and facilities, reorganization of services, enrollment procedures, and dissemination of information about LINCKS to the community are discussed. Two levels of project activities are described: (1) those involving direct interaction with program members, such as day care, educational workshops, and referral; and (2) those concerned with building and strengthening links among formal and informal support systems for adolescent parents and their children. It is concluded that though LINCKS has successfully recruited students, its services are underutilized and many are in need of refinement or complete overhaul. Some suggestions are offered for improving the project. (GC)

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Assessing the Year I Effort:
A Process Evaluation of Linking Institutional Networks to Community and Kinship Systems

Submitted to the Washington DC Parent Child Center

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INTRODUCTION

The primary purpose of this document is to report process evaluation findings on the first of three years of implementation for the LINCKS (Linking Institutional Networks for Community and Kinship Systems) Project. Subsidiary objectives have also guided its development--to share what has been learned the first year of operation, and to produce a description of the project.

As a process evaluation, we hope that this document will have direct utility for the project staff as they review their first year accomplishments and plan for those of the second year. As a descriptive report, it should allow groups with similar program interests to build on the LINCKS experience in developing their programs.

We begin by providing background material on the project and its objectives and on the framework of the evaluation. These sections are followed by two chapters that describe and discuss the implementation of major project components. The final section of the report is a summary of project accomplishments and suggested avenues for improvements.

BACKGROUND OF THE PROJECT

LINCKS is the product of a unique "linked" organizational effort among the Washington, D.C. Parent Child Center (PCC), Cardozo High School, and the American Institutes for Research (AIR). This three-year research and demonstration project seeks to show how communities can work together for better development of their young-parent families. As a research project, LINCKS studies how formal and informal networks operate to provide for developmental needs of young mothers and their children. As a demonstration project, LINCKS is showing how a mediating structure, in this case PCC, can forge links between people and organizations to create a community network that provides improved support to teenaged mothers and their children.

PCC, the project sponsor, and Cardozo High School cooperate to provide day care and other needed services so that teenaged parents can continue as full participants of the Cardozo High School program. As subcontractor, AIR provides technical research assistance. The project is funded by HEW's Administration for Children, Family, and Youth (ACYF).

PCC was begun in 1968 as one of 33 Parent Child Centers funded by the Office of Economic Opportunity's home-based Head Start Program. A nonprofit, community-based organization, PCC has expanded to include programs for high school equivalency and parenting skills training for parents; day care and child development services for children from infancy to school age; and coordination with health care, nutrition, and other human services. Through all of its programs, it now provides services to approximately 2,500 persons who reside in the Shaw-Cardozo communities of Washington, D.C.

Cardozo High School has served the central area of Washington, D.C. since it began as part of a business school

in 1887. Currently, it educates 1,700 tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grade students--most from the Shaw-Cardozo communities.

AIR is a private, nonprofit behavioral science research organization with a well-established, demonstrated interest in applying research techniques to improve human performance. With the establishment of its Institute for Neighborhood Initiatives in 1977, a new focus was given to these interests by adopting a community-based approach.

PCC's relationship with both Cardozo High School and AIR antedates the conception of LINCKS. Since 1970, Cardozo had seen the impact of parenthood on increasing numbers of its students; and in 1975 it approached the PCC to investigate the possibility of day care for children of Cardozo students. The result was a jointly prepared proposal for a comprehensive service program for school-age parents to reduce the number of pregnancy-related school drop-outs and to improve parenting skills. Funding for the project was not available, however, and efforts temporarily ceased. PCC's relationship with AIR began in 1977, when AIR was providing technical assistance to Ward I, Inc., of which PCC was a member.

LINCKS' strategy for increasing support to teenaged parents was based on a belief shared by the three organizations--that existing social and human service resources were in need of a coordinating mechanism that would maximize their benefits for teenage parents and their children. An additional point of commonality was the organizations' experience that families, kin, and neighbors were important helpers in the development of young parents and their children and, therefore, should be included in any support network that might be created. LINCKS promised to deliver such a network by using the PCC as a community-based mediator to strenghen and enhance the benefits of existing community supports.

THE PROBLEM

Washington, D.C. experiences the full effects of the problems related to teenaged parenthood. One out of every four births in D.C. in 1976 was to a teenager, and over 1,000 children were born to women under age 18. D.C. has a higher fertility rate for girls aged 13-17 than any state in the nation. It has the second highest infant mortality rate of cities in the country and one of the highest maternal mortality rates. Recently, it was cited by HEW as one of 10 high priority areas for intervention to reduce infant mortality rates. The severity of this problem has prompted the D.C. Board of Education to present a resolution calling for strengthening of educational, health and social services resources for the prevention of teenage pregnancies and for preventing the interruption of education of teenage parents.

Cardozo High School has seen the impact of parenthood on its students as much as any high school in Washington, D.C. In the three years prior to the initiation of the LINCKS project, 10 percent of the female students in the school were known to become pregnant; and that percentage is undoubtedly low since all students do not make their pregnancies known to the school.

The Cardozo students are primarily black, unmarried, and eligible for public welfare: in short, they are representative of a population with high rates of unemployment, health problems, poverty, potential for further pregnancies, and infant mortality and morbidity.

Both Cardozo High School and PCC serve the Ward I area, an area whose physical and demographic characteristics give rise to many of the conditions which LINCKS attempts to address. Ward I is one of eight ward divisions of Washington, D.C. There are approximately 88,000 residents of the area, of which

45 percent are between 15 and 44 years of age, 33 percent are dependent (under 15 years and over 65 years) and 84 percent are non-white. The most recent statistics available (1971) show 18 percent of the area's population receiving public assistance. Twenty-two percent of the Ward's population have incomes below the poverty level, and the unemployment rate was estimated at 9.7 percent in 1976.

Ward I is primarily a residential area, with most of the residences clustered around the 10 business districts. Row housing is the dominant type of structure, and a majority of the row structures have been converted to multi-family use with consequent overcrowding problems. There are seven public housing developments in Ward I, and 12 new or rehabilitated structures which receive below-market-value rental assistance for their residents.

The general demographic and social characteristics of the Ward I area make clear the need for functioning information networks as well as access to public services for many residents. This research and demonstration project examines how such networks and formal services relate to teenaged parents, and how these parents can be assisted in maximizing use of those services.

The conceptual framework for LINCKS is based on two basic lines of research: (1) the parenting functions--physical support, emotional support and nurturance, identification, socialization, and education--as applied to both the adolescent mother and her child; and (2) the structure of neighborhood and kinship networks in urban communities and how they support the parenting functions.

For low- as well as higher-income families, all of the parenting functions cannot be controlled by the parents alone.

or within the family. The family now performs a coordinating function to obtain essential services for its children, while directly providing for their emotional, identification, and socialization needs. The situation of single adolescent parents is further complicated by their own needs for parenting.

Urban areas--such as the one in which Cardozo High school is located, where most residents are black and poor--are characterized by the existence of dense, kinship-friendship networks. The networks provide frequent, regular, and extensive assistance to each other, sharing physical supports like food, clothing, housing, and money. Nurturance, identification, and discipline are also provided by the kinship-friendship networks. LINCKS is exploring all of these areas, as well as the functions of formal and informal networks in providing for the social, educational and emotional development of school-age parents and their children.

OBJECTIVES

In its proposal to the Administration for Children, Youth, and Families, PCC defined its three-year objectives as follows:

> Our major objective in LINCKS is to demonstrate that the total support provided to a school-age parent and her or his child can be increased by maximizing the use of existent formal and informal structures in the community. In doing this, we will also achieve three subsidiary objectives:
>
> (1) Identify and document the roles of the community, neighborhood, and kinship networks in performing parenting functions for both the adolescent parent and her child.
>
> (2) Demonstrate that small increases in staffing of a neighborhood mediating structure can multiply benefits for family and child development by linking services and neighborhood and kinship groups into an integrated network.

(3) Evaluate the effectiveness of the demonstration project in meeting the major objectives above and in achieving success in terms of (a) mother's school completion, (b) fewer subsequent pregnancies, and (c) child health.

The strategy for meeting these objectives would be accomplished in three phases. In the first year, PCC and Cardozo would reorganize education and other human services to implement a program to provide child care, parenting education, and other needed services to Cardozo students. At the same time, PCC would collect and analyze extensive data on how the students currently interact with their kinship and neighborhood networks and with the formal system of social services. These two tasks would lead to recommendations as to how networks could be more effectively used.

Then, in the second phase (Year II), PCC would put its most promising ideas for network cooperation into action. The mode of service delivery would be changed to activate support networks for students who have none (or very weak ones) and to increase and strengthen the efforts of support networks that were already active.

In the third phase (Year III), the project would assess where it was making progress and what continued to be in need of change. A detailed account of the project's experience, outcomes, and process evaluation findings would be provided to enable other program managers to take advantage of this newly acquired knowledge.

As stated previously, the purpose of this report is to examine the extent to which the demonstration project has been implemented during its first year of operation and what has been learned in the process.

THE LINCKS STUDENTS

Fifty-five* students enrolled in the LINCKS project during the period from August 1978 through June 1979. All but two are female, and all are black. Their ages range from 15 to 23, with an average age of 17. All but two of the students are single, and all are full-time students at Cardozo High School. The students are distributed rather evenly among the three grades in the school. Sixteen are in the tenth grade, 17 in the eleventh, and 14 in the twelfth.

All LINCKS students are inner-city residents of Washington, D.C. Forty-two live within the Ward I area where PCC and its target population are located; four live in Southeast, and one in Northeast.

Only three of the students have established their own households, and most (37) of the others continue to live with their family of origin. Twelve of the students reside with both parents, 22 with their mothers only, and three with their fathers only. The remaining seven are living with a relative or friend.

Only eight of the 53 mothers were pregnant with their first child at the time they enrolled in LINCKS. The rest became parents before they entered the project. Thirty-four had one child, eight had two children, and two had three children. For most students, parenting responsibilities were assumed when they were very young. The mean age at the time of their first child's birth was 16.8, and 23 of the students were 16 years of age or younger when their first child was born.

Most of the students have had some work experience. Twelve were working at the time they entered LINCKS, and 32 reported that they had at least one job in the past. For most students, work appears to have been a supplementary,

*The total sample size is 55. Because of missing data, the N for individual statistics varies.

rather than primary source of income. Thirty-three receive public assistance, 23 receive food stamps, 36 are covered by Medicaid, five receive social security payments, and 18 partipate in the school lunch program.

EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

In this section we discuss our approach to analyzing the project. Sources of data are described as well.

THE RATIONALE

Figure I displays the underlying logic and expected sequence of events for the three-year period of the LINCKS demonstration. The model, referred to as a rationale, provides a framework within which each of the project components and their interrelationships can be examined. We have used it in this analysis as a tool for a comparative assessment of actual project events relative to those that might have been expected to occur. The rationale was constructed by abstracting from the PCC's proposal to HEW and from on-going project documentation. To ensure its accuracy, it was presented to the PCC staff for their review and suggested modifications.

Within this framework of the rationale, project components are treated as being of one of five specific types: inputs and immediate outcomes, activities (or processes), intermediate outcomes, long-term outcomes, or disposing conditions.

The *inputs* include all those things that are needed for the project to work. These are the HEW grant, PCC's reassignment of staff and facilities, the agreement with Cardozo High School for allocation of school staff and physical space, the establishment of Professional and Neighborhood Advisory Committees, and the award of a subcontract to AIR. As a result of these inputs, several *immediate outcomes* are expected to occur. These are the reorganization of PCC/Cardozo services, the dissemination of information on the project, the establishment of enrollment procedures, and the definition

of roles for the various consulting committees and individual advisors.

Both inputs and immediate outcomes contribute to the *activities*--or processes--of the project, which are its actual operations. At this stage, there is an interaction between the project and its clients. Project activities are both what the project does and how it does them.

For LINCKS, activities occur at three related levels. The first includes those activities that provide direct service to the clients, identified in Figure I as recruitment, client entry, and client services. The second includes activities designed to initiate and strengthen linkages among PCC, the school, and other resources that are current or potential sources of support for the young parents and their children. The third level is the research component, for which AIR bears a major responsibility. This consists of research design, instrument development, supervision of data collection, data analysis for identified research questions, and the production of process and outcome evaluations.

Potential interaction effects among the three levels of project activities are shown in Figure I by broken lines that identify how second- and third-level activities (linkages and research efforts) feed back to, and can have an impact on, direct client services and development of community linkages. The assumption is that research findings will contribute to improved planning and implementation of the demonstration program, while the expansion and strengthening of coordinated efforts with the formal and informal helping systems will contribute to increased opportunities for students to participate in the program and obtain improved overall support for themselves and their children.

As a consequence of the project inputs and activities, the third component of a change project--*intermediate outcomes*-- is brought about. Figure I elucidates some of the more important intermediate outcomes that we might expect LINCKS to produce: student participation in LINCKS activities; supportive relationships among staff and program participants; increased student awareness of formal and informal helping resources; mutually supportive relationships among the young parents; greater student consciousness of health, nutrition, and child parenting needs; reduced obstacles to completion of education; a greater likelihood that students will obtain employment; and increased career potential.

The fourth component of the project is its *long-term impact*, i.e., the planned or unplanned impacts on the problems for which resolution or mitigation is sought. Individual projects seldom are proposed, and rarely are expected, to provide a complete attainment of such goals. It is always expected, however, that a given project will contribute to the solution of such problems, even if only to a small degree. Long-term outcomes for LINCKS are increased capability of young parents to care for themselves and their children, to delay further childbearing, to complete high school, and to improve their career potential.

The final project component is the *disposing conditions* surrounding its implementation. These are all of the conditions, attitudes, or experiences that are beyond the project's control but that can affect the implementation or outcome of project activities. Specification of these conditions for a social action project is typically without limit. For this analysis, we will consider only those disposing conditions that seem particularly influential in their impact on project implementation.

Disposing conditions related to the first project component, inputs and immediate outcomes, are: school resources, the 1979 teachers' strike, characteristics of the young parent population, and the environment of Cardozo High School.

Because the purpose of this analysis is to describe and analyze how LINCKS has been implemented during its first year of operation, we will focus our discussion on three sets of project components--those identified in the rationale as inputs and immediate outcomes, activities or processes, and disposing conditions. The first two sets--inputs and immediate outcomes and activities or processes--are discussed in separate chapters. Where disposing conditions have had an identifiable impact on these two sets of components, they have been included in the appropriate chapter. Intermediate outcomes will also be addressed in those instances where they are known and of direct relevance to a discussion of project activities.

DATA SOURCES

We have drawn from a number of data sources in our discussion and analysis of each project component. They include:

- archival records and project documentation,
- interviews with students and school personnel, and
- direct observations by the evaluators.

Archival Records and Project Documentation

Project staff have maintained extensive records on students in the program and on project activities and linkages. Structured instruments have been completed on each project participant, activity, and linkage; and staff members have done weekly recordings on their interaction with the students,

school personnel, and local community groups. These data are the primary source of information for the section on program activities.

Interviews

Toward the end of the 1978-79 school year, PCC staff interviewed 45 of the 55 students who had enrolled in the project. Much of the interview was devoted to assessing student needs, determining how students had benefited from the program, and gathering student recommendations for program improvements. Findings from these interviews are incorporated in the section on client services. In June 1979, the AIR staff interviewed 11 key Cardozo personnel to assess their understanding of the objectives and activities of the project, obtain descriptions of how they had contributed to the project, and gather their recommendations for improvement. Combined with the project records described above, these interviews form the basis for the section on linkages with the school.

Direct Observations

AIR staff have had extensive on-site interaction with the demonstration staff and have attended many of the program's activities. During the first five months of operation, for example, AIR staff met with program staff and attended LINCKS activities twice a week or more, documenting the program's development and observing and recording program activities. These data are a primary source of information for the section on inputs and immediate outcomes.

INPUTS AND IMMEDIATE OUTCOMES

To reiterate, inputs and immediate outcomes are all of the program components required for the project to operate. As reflected in Figure I, the major inputs and immediate outcomes include staffing and facilities, reorganization of services, enrollment procedures, and informing the community of the project (dissemination). In this section we discuss each of these project components--what the program has done, it successes, and difficulties.

STAFFING AND FACILITIES

Staffing

The project's staffing comprises paid personnel from PCC and from Cardozo High School and several volunteers--a social work intern and members of a local sorority, Delta Sigma Theta, Inc. (Delta).

PCC staff. The PCC staff consists of a project coordinator and two assistants. Their primary function is to ensure that young parents receive the services and support they need for both themselves and their children. As such, they provide a number of direct services--day care, counseling, parent education--and arrange for many additional services through referral and follow-up. They devote a substantial portion of their time to data collection as well. The PCC/LINCKS Coordinator has responsibility for daily management of the project in addition to the activities identified above.

Until May 1979, when the coordinator was made full-time, all PCC/LINCKS staff positions were half time or less (50 percent for the coordinator and 40 percent for each research assistant). PCC staff members are the only demonstration personnel whose positions are funded by the HEW grant.

Cardozo staff. Cardozo staff consists solely of the LINCKS school coordinator, a teacher with split responsibility for teaching and for LINCKS. Her LINCKS assignments include: in-school communication, assisting in the resolution of school-related student problems, and monitoring the progress of many of the young parents. Her homeroom is made up entirely of LINCKS students; in the 1978-79 school year, this allowed her to maintain daily contact with 21 of the 55 students enrolled in the project.

Volunteer staff. A social work intern has assisted the core staff (PCC and Cardozo) by performing a number of tasks such as monitoring students' school attendance, making home visits, helping young parents enroll in school or obtain services, and assisting with data collection. She has worked on the project three days a week.

The Delta sorority members have sponsored four specific program activities--educational workshops, a pals program, counseling, and a tutoring service. Most often, this has meant a monthly event; but in general, they have been involved in the project as students have indicated an interest or need.

Discussion. The program's staffing pattern is far from the ideal. It consists of multiple actors, most with multiple tasks; and, except for the LINCKS coordinator, each member of the staff has one or more commitments to non-LINCKS assignments or projects. The result is a continuing demand on the staff to juggle responsibilities and attempt to meet each.

The PCC positions have proven to be the most difficult since these are the staff who bear major responsibility for carrying out the program. With only partial coverage on LINCKS, they have frequently been confronted with unpredictable and avoidable demands by other PCC programs for which they were responsible. At times this has diverted as much as a week or more of their attention, making it difficult to meet the

predictable, steady requirements for coordination and implementation of LINCKS. Reassignment of the LINCKS coordinator to a full-time commitment as of May should minimize some of the difficulties, but the split-time positions of her staff are likely to persist as impediments to program operations.

The problems are hardly the fault of the program. The proposal to HEW called for three full-time workers, but the positions could not be filled because of a 25 percent reduction in grant monies for the demonstration. The project has had to "make do" in the midst of multiple constraints.

Facilities

The project operates out of PCC and Cardozo High School, located within a mile of one another in the Shaw-Cardozo community.

PCC facilities. Project facilities within the PCC have included offices for the PCC staff and the social work intern, slots at the day care center for the adolescent parents' children, and conference room space for project workshops and meetings.

Cardozo facilities. Cardozo has allocated office space for the LINCKS School Coordinator and has set aside one classroom for centralized homeroom placement of the LINCKS students. It has also provided space for program workshops and meetings.

Discussion. With the exception of day care, which will be discussed in a subsequent chapter, facilities have been adequate for the project activities and have been obtained at no additional costs. Moreover, by maximizing use of school facilities, the project has been able to conduct most activities where they are most accessible for students--on school grounds.

REORGANIZATION OF SERVICES

PCC and Cardozo were already providing the individual services and supports teen parents needed, but those services had to be reorganized and scheduled to create a comprehensive program. The specific needs for reorganization were:

- to reassign student homerooms to provide a central location for LINCKS students;
- to reassign PCC staff to Cardozo to provide intake, counseling and social services;
- to expand the curriculum in the Child Studies course;
- to reschedule the hours of the day care center to accommodate students' school and work schedules; and
- to schedule workshops in areas of special need.

The specific purpose of each reorganization task and how each was accomplished is described below.

Homeroom Reassignment

There were several reasons for consolidating homeroom placements for the LINCKS program members:

1. to foster relationships among the program members and encourage the development of a peer support system;
2. to provide a central contact point for project staff to coordinate activities with the program members; and
3. to increase program visibility within the school, encouraging referrals and enrollment.

At the request of the PCC, the school administration agreed to assign one homeroom exclusively for LINCKS students. The LINCKS School Coordinator was the designated homeroom teacher.

Discussion. There is evidence that homeroom consolidation did produce the expected outcomes. Observations of the PCC staff, Cardozo personnel, and the evaluators confirm that several of the students became good friends and a substantial source of support for one another. The PCC staff have consistently reported that centralized homeroom placement is the only reliable means of assuring regular contact with the students. Finally, interviews with school personnel indicate that reassignment contributed to program visibility as well--all but one of the persons interviewed equated the LINCKS program with the activities in the LINCKS homeroom.

However, fewer than half (21 of 55) of the students were given reassignments during the course of the school year. While this does not detract from program visibility, it may affect the outcome for students who are not reassigned, since their opportunities for peer and staff support will be more limited.

Reassignment of PCC Staff

The purpose of assigning PCC staff to Cardozo was to make them more accessible to the students--to enroll parents in the program and provide services as needed. Initially, staff hours were arranged during one lunch period a week. After the first few months of project operation, the number of hours was increased to make staff available on a twice a week basis.

Discussion. This phase of reorganization was accomplished quickly and with no identified difficulties. Reassignments were made in the first month of project operations, and the staff has maintained regular hours throughout the school year.

Modifications in the Child Studies Course

The purpose of modifying the course in child studies already offered by the school was to provide additional educational experiences for the LINCKS students. As the course existed, instruction was offered in child development and how to provide basic child care. The intent was to add two new dimensions--parenting skills and job readiness--by holding weekly classes in each.

For the parenting skills class, different approaches were taken in each of the two school semesters. During the first, a volunteer psychologist taught one class a week on parenting skills at the PCC. Because of poor attendance, however, a new strategy was required for the second school semester. During that term, the regular course instructor taught the class using a curriculum package called "Exploring Parenting."

The class in job readiness was taught by the school career specialist; but midway through the first semester, the teacher resigned from Cardozo and the project was unable to find someone to replace him.

Discussion. The project had mixed successes in this phase of reorganization. Problems were encountered throughout the school year, but some were more solvable than others. Difficulties with the parenting skills class were caused by factors within the project's control--location at the PCC. By rescheduling the class at Cardozo and providing an instructional sequence that could be delivered by the full-time teacher, parenting education was provided throughout the school year.

Instruction in job readiness proved more difficult to implement. Following the resignation of the career specialist, the staff was unable to recruit a replacement; and the class had to be cancelled for the remainder of the school year.

Rescheduling Day Care Hours

The need for rescheduling of hours at the PCC day care center was created by the students' schedules at school and, in some cases, work. For all of the students' children, this meant arranging for mid-day pick up. For a few, it required early arrivals as well.

Discussion. The project was quick to accommodate these needs and has maintained flexible procedures that are responsive to individual schedules.

Scheduling of Workshops

The purpose of rescheduling workshops was (1) to offer educational activities in areas of special need, and (2) to arrange them at a time and location that would suit students' school schedules.

Six workshops were held to cover a variety of special need areas: parenting, child abuse, budgeting, consumer information, career development, self-concept, grooming, drug abuse, and social services. Three of the six were conducted by the Delta Sorority members, two by the PCC staff, and one by the social work intern. All but one of the workshops were held at the PCC shortly after school classes were dismissed.

Discussion. The primary problem with workshops has been identifying and recruiting individuals who could conduct them when more students could attend--during the school lunch hour. The project's existing staff and volunteers have been unable to do this. Consequently, while the project has been successful in providing a wider variety of educational activities, only a small proportion of the students have attended because of the after school schedule.

ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES

Eligibility and Termination Criteria

One of the project's first tasks was to decide who was eligible to join and remain in the program. The criteria are:

- to be a school-aged parent or to be of school age and at least five months pregnant;
- to have parental consent if under 18;
- to attend Cardozo High School and LINCKS activities regularly (two weeks of unexcused absence of a parent from school or of a child from the day care center could result in termination from the program); and
- for students with children in day care at PCC, to undergo parent and child physical examinations, show children's birth certificates, to arrive and pick up children at the day care center promptly and to be at or below the poverty level of family income.

Discussion. Because staff have given students ample assistance, certification and consent requirements have not presented problems. Other criteria have, however. Attendance at LINCKS activities has been consistently low (attendance at workshops, for example, ranged from three to 11 students), and several students have poor attendance at school (the mean absentee rate was 11.5 days during a 42-day marking period) yet many students have been allowed to stay in the program. On the other hand, some young parents with good potential for long-term development are, at least currently, unsuited for full-time school attendance, but are able to profit from an alternative training or education program with continued participation in LINCKS. These students are supposed to leave the program, however. This leads to a central question: What can realistically be expected of these students?

Given the differences in students' schedules, needs, interests, and levels of motivation, perhaps attendance at all LINCKS activities is an unrealistic criterion. And for many of the students, regular school attendance may be equally unrealistic. We know that most of the young parents who joined LINCKS in the first school semester had been out of school for a year or more before returning. It seems reasonable to assume that readjustment to a routine schedule would take time, and that the process would be more difficult with the added demands made by children.

Irregular enforcement of attendance requirements has caused confusion among PCC and Cardozo personnel as to when enrollment in the school and/or project should be continued, and this may be contributing to some students' relaxed attitudes about their overall performance. The project's inability to obtain timely reports from Cardozo on students' class attendance is one of the reasons for this, but others are related to staff uncertainty as to what the project demands.

DISSEMINATION

This year, four news articles describing the process and progress of the project have been published in local newspapers and newsletters. In addition, a news release announcing the project and its objectives was mailed to 123 community agencies, organizations, businesses, and individuals who work with young parents and their children. LINCKS participants and staff have also participated in local conferences, radio shows, and television programs on adolescent parenting, and two project participants have testified before staff of the U.S. Senate Sub-committee on day care needs.

PCC plans to sponsor a workshop for local organizations and agencies concerned with the support needs of adolescent parents, and project staff are currently preparing for it.

Discussion. Dissemination of new knowledge has become a major priority of federal agencies that fund demonstration projects. Much has been learned about successful intervention methods; but because of limited resources and lack of motivation or know-how, programs have often failed to share their learning so that others can benefit or expand upon it. LINCKS has been very active in this regard. As a result of its efforts, the project has had many requests for information.

ACTIVITIES

Activities (or processes) are the actual operations of a project--what the project does. For LINCKS, activities occur at two separate but related levels. One set of activities involves direct interaction with the program members. Day care, educational workshops and referral are examples. The other focuses on building and strengthening links among formal and informal support systems to enhance the network of support available to adolescent parents and their children. Each set of activities contributes to the impact of the other. By providing direct services, the program enhances the parents' capability for maximizing their use of informal supports and advocating for more responsive formal services. By strengthening the overall network of support, it contributes to the overall amount of support available. This chapter deals with both levels of activity.

DIRECT SERVICES TO CLIENTS

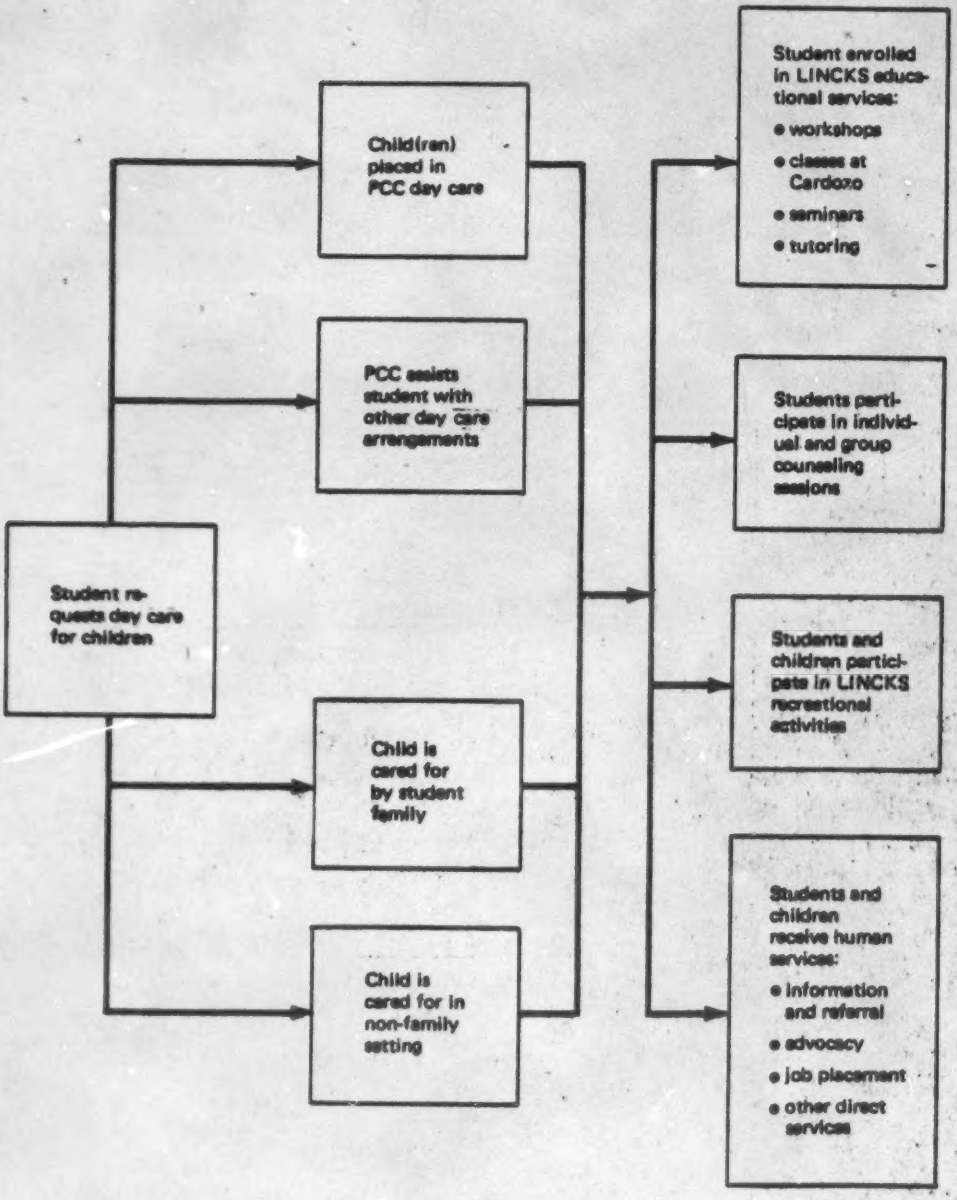
Project operations that provide direct services to clients include recruitment and the assortment of supports provided (see Figure II). This section describes each of these activities and PCC's success with each.

Recruitment

Project recruitment activities during the first year were extensive. Using lists provided by the school, staff contacted 131 students who had become pregnant since the beginning of the 1976-77 school year. This figure represents 83 percent of all Cardozo students known to have become pregnant during that time. Meetings were held with teachers, the PTA, and an assortment of other persons within the school who conduct activities related to pregnancy prevention, health care, employment, and parent education. Pamphlets describing the

FIGURE II

DIRECT SERVICES TO CLIENT


Student requests day care for children
Child(ren) placed in PCC day care
PCC assists student with other day care arrangements
Child is cared for by student family
Child is cared for in non-family setting
Student enrolled in LINCKS educational services:
• workshops
• classes at Cardozo
• seminars
• tutoring
Students participate in individual and group counseling sessions
Students and children participate in LINCKS recreational activities
Students and children receive human services:
• information and referral
• advocacy
• job placement
• other direct services

project were distributed to the general student body at two school health fairs; and as mentioned in the section on dissemination, news releases with the project's description have been mailed to all local organizations that might serve school-age parents and their children.

Discussion. Of all of these efforts, only one has had a substantial impact on enrollment--direct contact by PCC with the students identified by the school. Of the 55 students who entered the program through June 1979, only three had heard of the program through a source other than PCC.

The project now has 80 students enrolled and more applicants than it may be able to serve; and, with 67 new pregnancies identified in the school this past year, it is unlikely that there will be either the need or the resources to recruit outside of the school-identified population.

It must be assumed that the selection process has produced a biased sample of young parents. The ones who decided to join presumably differ in certain ways from those who chose not to join. Further, even this self-selected population is drawn from among a subset of young parents. Some of the community's adolescent parents have dropped out of school before becoming pregnant; others who remained in school may not have been identified.

Day Care Services

In the original program plan, only 20 of the students' children were to be placed in the PCC day care facilities. PCC care was to be divided between infants and toddlers. For those who could not be served by PCC, it was expected that other arrangements could be made with family, neighbors, or other community day care centers.

Discussion. Two problems have emerged to make this plan unworkable: (1) most students need infant rather than toddler day care services, and (2) both formal and informal resources have proven inadequate for meeting the need.

Other community day care centers have long waiting lists of applicants and are consequently unavailable to children of LINCKS students, and many of the students' family members are working and are unable to care for the students' children. Linkages cannot help if the resources do not exist.

Moreover, LINCKS staff have continually reported difficulty in maintaining contact with students whose children are not in the PCC day care center. Nor do they have the opportunity to monitor systematically the children's progress. Clearly, this creates a management problem for staff, and it may affect program outcome as well (or at least measurement of program outcome).

A solution is promised by the D.C. School Board, which--as a result of testimony by the PCC staff and members of the LINCKS program--has allocated funds to establish an infant day care center at Cardozo High School in the 1979-80 school year. But the experience points out some concerns about the basic project strategy. In at least one instance, formal services are not adequate, and the resources cannot be provided by the informal helping system.

Educational Activities

Educational activities have been provided through courses and activities sponsored by PCC and Cardozo. At Cardozo, students are promised the opportunity to participate in a variety of courses, activities, and services that can contribute to their development both as parents and individuals. These include:

- courses in child study, foods, cooking, home management, clothing, and health for expectant mothers;
- films, workshops, and health education activities sponsored by the Improved Pregnancy Outcome Project;
- informal education on family planning and sexuality through the Peer Counseling Program, sponsored by Planned Parenthood; and
- career and employment assistance through the school guidance counselor and the Cardozo Mini-Employment Center.

Through PCC, six workshops have been held to inform and assist students with issues related to parenting, child abuse, budgeting, consumer information, career development, self concept, grooming, drug abuse, and social services.

Discussion. Theoretically, students participating in the program could benefit from a comprehensive set of learning activities that would address their major needs both as parents and as individuals. In reality, only a small percentage of young parents are doing so.

There are two major reasons for this: accessibility and participation. Some activities never materialized--such as the peer counseling program that managed to train its counselors but failed to get them operating. Others, such as the services of the guidance department and the Mini-Employment Center, have been available but are so overtaxed by the needs of the general student body that LINCKS students have received only minimal benefits. These are situations over which the project has little control, except to find alternative services and advocate actively for those that exist. The latter has been done with some success with the employment center. The PCC coordinator was able to get summer employment for ten LINCKS students and a promise of more concentrated services for the coming year. Guidance services may be rejuvenated as well.

The school counselor reports that promised additional staffing for the upcoming school year should permit her to carry out what was planned for this past year--regular, concentrated meetings with the LINCKS students to improve attendance, grades, and employment readiness.

Participation problems have occurred at two levels. Student participation at workshops has been low (as few as three participants and never more than 11) and only a small percentage has been enrolled in the program-oriented courses provided by Cardozo. Even the course in Child Studies, which was taken by more LINCKS students than any of the other courses, included only 16 of the 55 students.

Apart from the well known difficulties of getting teens to attend any voluntary educational activity, scheduling seems to have been the main obstacle to workshop attendance. A variety of times and days of the week have been tried by the project staff, leading them to conclude that workshops must be held at the school and during school hours to have good attendance. Plans have already been implemented to do this next year.

Staff review of individual student's schedules may help to increase the numbers enrolled in school courses. By doing so, they could ensure that the students are aware of the courses and the benefits pertaining to each.

Individual and Group Counseling Services

The project has offered a variety of counseling services by utilizing PCC and Cardozo staff and a volunteer from the Delta Sorority. Since November, the PCC coordinator and/or assistants have been holding two counseling sessions a week during school lunch hours. The original purpose of the sessions was to gather student ideas on how the project should develop and what types of services were needed. Over time,

they have become a vehicle for contact among students and staff and for students to obtain assistance in a readily available fashion. Counseling is also available through the school guidance counselor and from a professional volunteer from the Deltas, whose role was to work directly with students whose attendance was poor and to advise others on requirements for graduation.

Discussion. Project documentation and discussions with the students make clear that most counseling is done informally by the PCC staff. Many of the young parents make frequent, unscheduled visits to PCC to share their everyday difficulties and to seek help in their resolution. In some cases, this has resulted in the staff person's becoming a consistent source of support and encouragement to the student.

The more formal counseling sessions are not being utilized to a great extent by the young parents. The lunch time sessions tend to be used most by a small core of students. Thirty-four of the 55 students enrolled in the program attended at least one session, but only eight went five times or more. The school guidance counselor reported seeing only five or six students during the course of the year. Even considering students' poor school attendance, the numbers are quite low. As noted earlier, the guidance counselor hopes to increase her activities with LINCKS students now that additional staff have been assigned to her department. The Delta volunteer saw five students during the year. The service started late in the project, and health and transportation difficulties made her schedule erratic.

Recreational Activities

While recreation is not an identified project service, some recreational activities have been provided. In November, PCC and the Deltas arranged for a potluck dinner for the young

parents; and for Christmas, the program sponsored a party for two- to four-year old children in the PCC day care center. Also, a pals program was initiated which could have added to recreational opportunities by assigning a Delta volunteer to spend informal time with a young parent and provide her with new ideas on how to use free time.

Discussion. Assistance in constructive use of free time may be a need for some participants. When asked about cases of teenage pregnancy, several school personnel felt that too much free time and the inability to use it were major causes of the problem. During formal interviews with the LINCKS participants, 34 (79%) out of 43 respondents said that they usually had at least some free time. The range of time reported was from one to four hours daily, with a mean 2.4 hours. Students typically used their free time to clean the house, visit friends and relatives, take their children to parks, watch TV, and sleep. The Delta program for constructive use of free time was discontinued because both volunteers and students were confused about its purpose, and staff time was inadequate to provide needed coordination and direction.

Human Services

The PCC/LINCKS staff have devoted a substantial percentage of their time to providing human services. A review of case-workers' records revealed that there were 199 instances in which they had contact with students enrolled during the school year regarding a problem, difficulty, or concern of the student. The results of a needs assessment conducted with the young parents this year make clear why this has been necessary. More than half of the 45 students interviewed reported difficulties related to having to find a new place to live, trying to find a job, and running out of money before meeting monthly expenses. In addition, nearly half had problems with repairs in their homes (49%), serious school problems (42%), and serious concerns about their children (48%).

Discussion. While some problems have been resolved by providing the young parents with information or referral, more often a staff member has invested a significant amount of time in providing the service directly or in accompanying the young parent through the long bureaucratic process necessary to resolve the problem. Much of the function assumed by the worker is akin to that of a parent.

This intensive level of direct-service involvement entails risks for the program. One is that the significant investment of staff time in providing direct services may detract from the project's ability to develop the strong community linkages required for the demonstration's network of support. Another is the ever-present danger that the gradual easing of the young parents' dependence on staff will not occur. Since a major objective of the project is to build the capability of young parents to care for themselves and their children, this is an important consideration. This leads to a central issue in the development of LINCKS: To what extent has it been able to establish links to community resources?

LINKAGES WITHIN CARDOZO HIGH SCHOOL

During the first year of the project, the focus was on building a network of support within Cardozo for teenaged parents. Coordination and integration with other community resources will be thrusts in the second year of project implementation.

The project has made substantial headway in establishing a school-based network of support for student parents. Existing school resources with potential for contributing to the project's goals have been identified, cooperative efforts have been initiated with each, and efforts to create a formally structured and coordinated PCC/Cardozo project component have begun.

The Cardozo component of this linkage consists of educational and service personnel. These are the:

- school administrators, including the principal and two assistant principals;
- counselors from the guidance department;
- instructors for courses in Child Studies, Starting a Healthy Family, and Health for Expectant Mothers;
- social workers from the Improved Pregnancy Outcome Project (IPO);
- school nurse;
- social worker from the Adolescent Health Clinic, Upper Cardozo Group Health Foundation;
- LINCKS school liaison--a teacher at Cardozo; and
- director of the Cardozo Mini-Employment Center.

Early in the school year, the school principal and one of his assistants called a meeting of the PCC/LINCKS staff and all of the key school personnel identified above so that each could be informed of the other's plans, activities, and resources and a strategy could be developed for a coordinated school effort. All agreed that the group should meet on a monthly basis to share learning, make referrals, and monitor coordination difficulties that might occur.

Through its own efforts, the PCC/LINCKS staff has developed a network with some demonstrable impact. The following are some examples:

- PCC participated in the development and implementation of two school health fairs sponsored by the IPO.
- mutual referrals have been made for LINCKS, the IPO, and the Adolescent Health Clinic.
- the Child Studies course has been revamped to include topics on parenting and health.

- the school administration has endorsed the program.
- there is regular interaction and coordination between the PCC and the Cardozo staff.

Discussion. The school/LINCKS committee lost its momentum after a few meetings and eventually discontinued its sessions, but there is strong support among school personnel for reestablishing the committee. The data suggest this may be worth doing.

Interviews with 11 of the school representatives indicated that most (9 of 11) of those interviewed were unaware of the total number of LINCKS participants and the scope of services available through the project. They had the impression that participants were limited to those placed in the LINCKS school coordinator's homeroom, which in fact are fewer than half of the population (21 of the 55 students). In addition, they thought that LINCKS was essentially a day care service and were unaware of many of the project's activities. Referrals may have been affected by these factors. The school nurse reported, for example, that the only students she referred to the project were those who needed day care services.

Access to relevant information on the project does not seem to be the reason for the staff's limited knowledge. Several interviewees reported that they had received more than adequate information, but often had not read it. A suggestion for addressing this problem was offered by one of the assistant principals: have the young parents themselves meet personally with each of their teachers and other school personnel to describe their involvement with the project and what it attempts to do. The students had done so with her, and it was evident in her understanding of the project.

As mentioned in the section on human services, another area in need of strengthening is student utilization of program-oriented courses. A more coordinated effort among program

and school personnel to review and structure participants' course schedules may ensure that as many as possible are assigned to these courses. One course that seems particularly promising for meeting a variety of the young parents' information needs is Starting a Healthy Family. Only three of the LINCKS students were enrolled during this past year.

Perhaps of most concern to school personnel is the young parents' school attendance. The guidance counselor, an assistant principal, and the LINCKS school coordinator all expressed interest in cooperating with the PCC/LINCKS staff to try to minimize this problem by working individually with the students to emphasize the importance of regular attendance and provide them with the support they may need to reduce absenteeism. They also mentioned a need for clarification of the criteria for continued participation in the program and improved coordination between PCC and Cardozo staff when termination of a student was being considered.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

At the outset, the PCC had three major objectives for its first year of operation. These were: (1) to recruit up to 50 students for the program, (2) to reorganize the services of PCC and Cardozo High School to establish a comprehensive program for teenaged parents and their children, and (3) to strengthen and expand its linkages within the school.

The program's success in achieving these objectives may be assessed at two levels:

- Did the program succeed in doing what it promised?
- Are the activities themselves useful and used?

As the preceding discussion detailed, LINCKS achieved substantial success on the first of these measures. They exceeded their goals for recruitment; a wide array of services has been offered; and its linkages within Cardozo have been strengthened markedly. But, when it comes to assessing the second issue, the problems are much greater. Services have been offered but are often under-utilized; and many are in need of revision, refinement, or (in some cases) a complete overhaul. We conclude with a review of the problems and some suggestions for solutions.

STAFFING

The primary problem in staffing is too few people. Three full-time positions were requested in the proposal to HEW, but only half were filled because of a reduction in the grant. Additional difficulties have been created by splitting staff time among two or more projects. With only a part-time commitment to LINCKS, PCC staff have often been confronted

with unpredictable and unavoidable demands from other PCC programs for which they are responsible. At times this has diverted as much as a week or more of their attention, making it difficult to meet the predictably steady requirements for LINCKS.

More money is one obvious solution, but another which might help as well would be to *consolidate the two part-time assistant positions into one full-time job.*

CENTRALIZED HOMEROOM PLACEMENT

Assigning LINCKS students to one homeroom has had identifiable benefits--an informal peer support system has emerged, the students have been more accessible to LINCKS staff, and program visibility has been increased within the school.

But only 21 of 55 students enrolled in the program were reassigned. *The program may want to meet with the school administration to determine whether more students could be centrally located in the future.*

MODIFICATIONS IN THE CHILD STUDIES COURSE

The course in child studies is an existing part of the curriculum at Cardozo. The purpose of modifying it was to provide educational services promised in the LINCKS proposal--parenting skills and job readiness. Although the initial plan for the parenting skills class had to be revised, the project was able to continue this class throughout the year. The class in job readiness, however, was maintained only through part of the first school semester. The class instructor resigned from the school and no replacement was recruited.

A workshop on career development was held to address some of the issues of employment readiness, but--given that career development is one of the project's three major intended outcomes--a more intensive effort in this area seems important. *The program may want to explore the possibility of involving another community agency in this effort. The Department of Human Resources and others offer activities for job readiness and career development--perhaps one would be willing to assume responsibility for this component of LINCKS.*

SCHEDULING OF WORKSHOPS

Six workshops have been held by the Delta Sorority and PCC staff to address issues of particular concern to the students. All but one were held at the PCC shortly after school was dismissed.

A wide array of topics have been covered, but only a small proportion of the students have attended. One problem seems to be scheduling--program experience and student comments indicate that the workshops would be attended by more students if held on school grounds during the lunch hour. To do this, however, the project will have to identify new workshop sponsors. The Deltas are not available during the lunch hour, and PCC staff have many existing commitments.

Local community agencies may provide solutions; there are several with community education components. If these activities are important to the program, the staff may want to develop a concrete plan at the earliest opportunity for contacting these agencies and developing a long-range plan.

ELIGIBILITY AND TERMINATION CRITERIA

There are several criteria for entering and remaining in the program. The problem has been enforcement. Several students have had prolonged absence from school, failed to attend LINCKS activities, and have been unreliable about on-time arrival at the day care center, but few students have been terminated. Irregular enforcement has been a source of confusion and concern among both PCC and Cardozo staff, and it may be contributing to some students' lax attitude toward school and the program as well.

The project may want to review the criteria themselves--perhaps they need revision. Most importantly, the program needs to be consistent in what it requires of the students.

RECRUITMENT

During the first six months of the project, the staff conducted a number of recruitment activities and was very successful in meeting its quota. Now the program has more applicants than it may be able to serve.

But only a small proportion of the students enter the program before their children are born. Whether students should join sooner is something the program will have to decide. The school nurse identified 67 new pregnancies in the 1978-79 school year alone. *If earlier enrollment of students is considered beneficial, the staff should meet with the nurse to develop systematic referrals.*

DAY CARE

The PCC has provided day care for up to 22 children at any one time. The program plan was to find alternative day care resources among informal helpers (family or other members of the community) or other day care centers.

But alternative plans have not worked. Other community centers have long waiting lists; many of the students' family members are unable to care for their children; and establishing home-based day care has not worked because willing community members have not been able to meet city certification requirements.

The School Board awarded money for establishing and staffing a center at the school which would accommodate a number of infants, but--as of January 1980--the center had not been opened.

Without reliable day care, students are unable to attend school regularly. Moreover, the staff have consistently reported that day care at PCC has contributed significantly to their ability to maintain contact with the students. *Ideally, the PCC might expand its own day care services; the absolute requirement, however, is that additional services be made available.*

EDUCATIONAL AND COUNSELING SERVICES

The project has provided a wide array of educational and counseling services for both parent and child development. Several courses are provided by PCC; a variety of workshops have been held; and both PCC and the Deltas have offered counseling services.

But only a small proportion of the students are receiving the benefits. Attendance at project activities has been low, and a relatively small number of the students have enrolled in the program-related courses or have taken advantage of the counseling offered. Additional counseling in scheduled classes may increase enrollment in the Cardozo courses; other attendance problems will be more difficult to solve.

The problem is not unusual--the difficulties of engaging interests and reliability among teens are well known. Regardless, the fact remains that low participation is likely to result in disappointing outcomes. *The issue of participation should be among the program's priorities for quick and intensive attention.*

LINKAGES WITH THE FORMAL AND INFORMAL SYSTEMS

As intended, LINCKS concentrated during the first year on creating linkages with Cardozo High School. The second and third years call for more extensive networking efforts. Through research done during its first year, LINCKS now has data on the services and supports available and the extent to which students know of them and use them. The next step is to strengthen support networks for those young parents who have them and to build support networks for those who do not. Enough has been learned during the first year to know that developing these links, particularly those with the informal system (family, kin, friends, and others), is not going to happen naturally; on the contrary, it is going to require a lot of effort.

At the time LINCKS began, PCC had many linkages with formal organizations upon which it could build and expand. A few new links were added during the first year. These organizations offer services in areas like housing, legal matters, day care, public assistance, Medicaid, food stamps, job training, employment, and health. Fourteen of these agencies have already been called upon to assist the members of LINCKS.

The informal system is more difficult. Few of the students' family members have shown interest in working actively with the program, and the project's few attempts to generate widespread involvement have had poor results.

None of the parents of the young mothers attended the parent orientation session scheduled in the fall of 1978, only one parent has agreed to serve on the Neighborhood Advisory Panel, and efforts to involve students' families in providing day care for the students' children have resulted in few successes.

The project will have to fight the natural tendency of programs to continue what they do best. For LINCKS this means resisting a possible inclination to continue as a traditional social service agency by focusing most of its efforts on providing direct services and limiting its use of other agencies to referrals. Incorporating the informal helping system into its network of support is perhaps the most innovative slant of the project, although the most difficult as well. To allow the concept to go untested would be very unfortunate.

At the earliest opportunity, staff should develop a concrete plan for making progress with both of these networks. Given the demands on staff time, a detailed plan for action and correspondent commitment of staff time will be critical to program success.